

1991

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Recommended Citation

(1991) "Front Matter," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 26: Iss. 1.
Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol26/iss1/2>

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VOLUME XXVI

*Studies
in Scottish
Literature*



*The Language and Literature
of Early Scotland*

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Printed in the United States of America

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Keyboarding and formatting of text

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Preface

The decision taken at Aberdeen in 1987 to hold the sixth conference of the International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature at the University of South Carolina was not an easy one. Columbia, South Carolina, seemed a very distant, almost improbable, place to hold a Scottish conference—and at the height of the hot season, too! By informal agreement the triennial conference had met alternately inside Scotland and outside of it, and as the 1987 meeting was held at the University of Aberdeen, the 1990 conference was to be held outwith Scottish borders. To add to the difficulty in selecting a site, Oxford University (St. Hilda's College) had also offered to host the conference. While a decision to come to America might be inviting to residents of Great Britain, with its possibility of research in American collections, the attraction of research at the Bodleian and elsewhere in Britain for scholars from Australia or South Africa, China or Finland, made the decision a difficult one indeed. Lobbying, though friendly, was intense. The argument for South Carolina was that it was time for the Conference to spread beyond Europe, demonstrating that Scottish literary and linguistic studies are now really global in scope. A further argument was put forward that such a conference would enable younger scholars, including post-graduate students, to attend and to meet senior scholars in the discipline. This argument carried the day, and I am pleased that indeed several junior people who could not have travelled to Oxford attended the meetings. It is pleasant to record that at the business meeting in Columbia, a sense-of-the-delegates vote was cast recommending that the 1996 meeting be held at St. Hilda's.

Inevitably a conference of this sort draws a wide range of papers, reflecting the diverse interests of the scholars who attend it. Following established procedure, there were plenary papers on topics which have a very broad interest, and concurrent sessions in which papers were grouped around a central theme, although, because these were not papers written on a particular topic, some sections did not have a single focus. Given the relative infrequency of these meetings it has always seemed appropriate for the conferences to spread the net wide rather than to focus more narrowly.

The participants in the Sixth International Conference felt that it was very successful, according to a questionnaire which was sent to all of them. The only substantial complaint was that it was too short; here American and European manners differ, and our procedure for this conference was vindicated by the fact that almost to a person all of the participants remained for the entire conference. A well-attended day of relaxation followed the conference in the form of a much-praised trip to Charleston. Holding the trip after the conference was over allowed those who had other plans to get away.

The Proceedings of these conferences have always been published, and from the start it was the intention of the organizers of the Sixth Conference to continue the tradition. After considering the various options, it was decided that devoting a volume of *Studies in Scottish Literature* entirely to the Proceedings would be the best way to go.

Just as the publication of the papers read at each of the meetings of this association has rested on the good will of the host institution, so the association itself has held together because of the interest and good will of participants. Over the years, as a result of the success of previous conferences, the feeling has grown that this group of scholars, with a firm commitment to earlier Scottish language and literature, should form themselves into an association. The idea was not new to the Sixth Conference, but at this one informal exchanges resulted in a draft constitution being presented at the Business Session, debated there, and passed. This document is published for the first time below.

The International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature must be almost unique in the annals of such associations in that it has, to date, not assessed membership dues. But conferences cost money to organize and run, and we are most grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for major funding. The University of South Carolina also provided major support, particularly the following: the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Department of English, the Byrnes International Center, the Koger Center for the Arts, and Thomas Cooper Library. The St. Andrew's Society of Columbia and the Robert Burns Society of the Midlands hosted a reception after the Jean Redpath concert at the Koger Center. The British Council, the British Council (Scotland), and the Scottish Arts Council made grants to us which enabled British scholars to attend. Several other scholars received financial help from their universities or national agencies. To all of these entities we are grateful for making the attendance of individual scholars possible.

The production of a volume of *SSL* which is twice its normal size would not have been possible short of doubling the price of the volume had it not been for a sizable grant from the Venture Fund of the University of South Carolina.

The continuation of the International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature was assured by the offer of the University of Glasgow and Strathclyde University to host jointly the 1993 meeting, details of which are set forth elsewhere in this volume. And then, we expect, St. Hilda's in 1996.

G.R.R.

Constitution of the International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature

(as adopted August 4, 1990, at the South Carolina conference)

1. The organization shall be called the International Association for Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature.
2. Its purposes shall be the holding of a triennial research conference, ordinarily to be held alternately within Scotland and elsewhere, and the maintenance of communication with scholars likely to attend such a conference.
3. The membership of the association shall be all registrants in either or both of the previous two conferences in this series, together with any who ask for their names to be added to the membership list during the inter-conference period.
4. The officers of the Association shall be elected at a business meeting held during each triennial conference and open to all registrants. The officers shall take office six months after each triennial conference, for a term of three years. The officers shall be a Convener and one or more Co-Conveners from the host institution for the next conference. The officers, with their host institution(s), shall have primary responsibility for:
 - (i) an annual mailing about conference plans to members (as defined in para. 3), and the maintenance of a membership mailing list for transmittal to their successors;
 - (ii) the conference program and arrangements;
 - (iii) editorial and publishing arrangements for the conference proceedings;
 - (iv) liaison and cooperation with the broader organizations or publication series in the field.
5. The current officers, together with the immediate past Convener and Co-Convener(s), shall form the Association's committee. This committee may at its discretion coopt up to three other scholars from among the Association's membership to balance representation by scholarly interest or nationality. The committee shall be responsible for:
 - (i) review of the proposed program for each conference;
 - (ii) consultation about conference plans or problems;
 - (iii) the agenda for each business meeting, including review of proposals from future hosts; no conference invitation is to be accepted for the business meeting agenda that does not include a formal letter of invitation and support to the Association from an appropriate administrator at the proposed host institution, and a copy of all such invitations or proposals shall be sent to each committee member at least one month in advance of the conference itself.
6. The publications of the Association shall be limited to the Proceedings of each conference.
7. There shall be no membership subscription.
8. Amendment to these provisions shall require due notice in the pre-conference mailing, together with a majority vote from those members present at the conference business meeting.